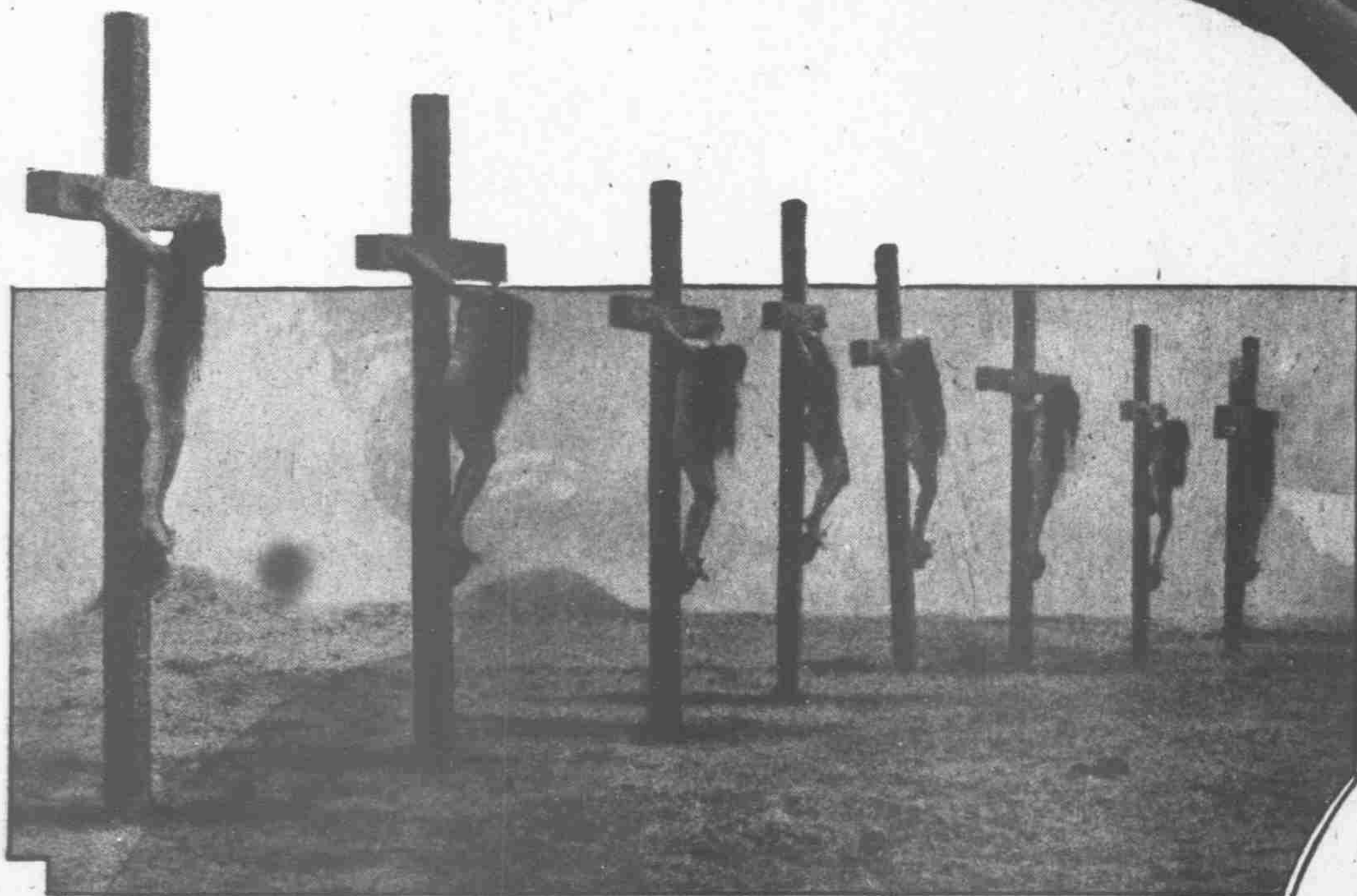


Ravished Armenia



Crucifixion of Armenian Christians As Shown in the Remarkable Film Story of Little Aurora Mardiganian's Experiences with the Cruel Turks.

From "Ravished Armenia," the Motion Picture Being Exhibited by the American Committee for Relief in the Near East in Their Drive for \$30,000,000 to Save the Perishing Armenians.

How Little Aurora, the Rescued Waif, Helped to Raise the Armenian Relief Fund to Save the Remnants of Her Persecuted People

INTO the ballroom of the Hotel Plaza the other day came a little figure which strangely contrasted with all that surrounded it. She hesitated at the door; a tear glistened in her eyes. It was Aurora Mardiganian—the little waif who was rescued from the clutches of the Turks by the American Committee for Armenian Relief.

Instead of the bright lights of that New York ballroom, she remembered the darkness of the tents of the bestial Kurds, who had possessed her not so many months ago.

The music of the orchestra was strangely different from the rattle of the Turkish drums which beat a call to summon an execution squad.

The warmth of the ballroom recalled by contrast the cold nights on the Armenian desert.

Her own dress, though simple, and the evening gowns of the fashionable women about her—so different from the bare feet and rags of herself and her companions during the two and a half years of wanderings in desolated Armenia.

And, strangest of all, to stand now a captive between the kindly protecting figures of Mrs. Oliver Harriman and Mrs. George W. Vanderbilt—this girl, who had been held captive in the harems of the wealthy Turks, had been dragged to the tents of wild Kurdish chiefs, who had been carried off into captivity slung on the saddle of an Arab raider, who had been purchased by a slave dealer and sold on the auction block to the highest bidder. With a helping hand Mrs. Harriman assisted the little waif to a chair, for the bones of Aurora's left foot have been painfully crushed. Although rescued by the Armenian Relief Committee from the cruelties of the Turks and Kurds, yet the girl is literally still suffering for Armenia.

And gladly suffering. The readers of this page are already familiar with the story of Aurora Mardiganian's sufferings at the hands of her persecutors. They have read of the destruction before her eyes of her father, her mother, her brothers, her sisters, all her relatives, all the residents of her native city. And it was the heartrending story of this rescued waif which the American Committee for Relief in the Near East decided to put into a vivid motion picture to assist in its campaign to raise \$30,000,000 to save the perishing remnants of ravished Armenia.

Naturally, the girl herself in re-enacting those terrible scenes was a central figure in the film. And in playing her part in one episode she met a mishap.

The scene being taken was the reproduction of Aurora's escape from the harem of Hadji Ghafour, the Turkish Holy Man of Geulick. Aurora and Miss Graham, an English missionary, who was young and

pretty, and who voluntarily had joined the Armenian exiles, had been stolen by the Kurds from their party in the midst of the desert. The Kurdish chief, struck by the attractiveness of the two girls, had carried them on his horse to Geulick, where Hadji Ghafour bargained for them and eventually purchased them.

While she was waiting for her "betrothal" at the hands of Hadji Ghafour (when one of his new girls was summoned in the evening to the Hadji's apartments it was her "betrothal"), Aurora saw one Armenian girl captive hung by her heels from a window-sill outside the haremlik until she died, and she saw another girl who refused to accept Mohammed beaten to death by the Hadji's negro slaves.

Aurora determined to escape and to brave death on the desert rather than remain for a "betrothal." With Miss Graham she made a rope of rugs and slid to freedom out of a haremlik window. Then she wandered in the desert until she found sanctuary in a forgotten monastery on the road to Diarbekir.

This was an actual experience. In the motion picture it is told just as Aurora remembered it. When the scene was being staged before the camera the director explained to her that she must "do now just as she did when she ran away from Hadji Ghafour."

Quickly the little girl tied together the corners of two rugs until they reached from a balcony to the ground twenty feet below. When the director called "Ready, Aurora," she flung the makeshift rope out the window and over the balcony rail. "Come down," the director cried, "just as you did at Geulick."

Quickly Aurora leaped to the balcony rail and, with the memory of her actual escape envisioned in her mind, she threw her body over until her feet dangled free and began to slide down the rope of rugs. But the rugs were bulky. In her excitement she lost her hold in their loose folds. She screamed and fell—tumbled into a heap on the earth below. Her foot curved under her and her ankle was fractured.

Physicians were called from the studio hospital. Opiates eased her pain and she was carried to her apartments. The fracture seemed, at first, to be slight, but she was ordered to remain in bed at rest for two or three weeks. "But that will delay the making of my picture—and the committee wants it quickly, that they may let all America see it," she cried.

Aurora pleaded with the physicians and the directors. "See," she said, leaping out of bed and throwing all her weight on the injured foot; "see, it is well already—it does not hurt at all—I can walk and do my picture all right now." She could not be dissuaded. She was carried back and forth from the studio, and only those

Persecuted People



One of the Armenian Relief Committee's Photographs of Rescued Little Ones.

scenes were then taken in which she could appear standing still or sitting—without having to walk or throw her weight on her ankle.

Gradually the hurt seemed to heal. She denied that it any longer pained her. When the directors were ready for the desert scenes—the wild scenes with the Kurds and other savages raiding the refugee camps and riding away with the prettiest girls they could steal from their mothers' arms—Aurora declared that her ankle was well and that she could do whatever was required of her.

And so the picture was finished on time. Then, when the last scene was taken—the picture of Aurora on the deck of the steamship reaching out her arms to the Statue of Liberty looming in the distance—the little girl collapsed and fell to the deck of the boat moaning with pain. "It is all done now—I have done my duty, and I cannot stand it any longer," she cried in her native tongue. "My foot—it has hurt me all the time—a knife runs into me every time I step on it."

Then the physicians took x-ray pictures of the injured ankle, and found that the fracture was much more serious than had been supposed, and that, instead of healing, it constantly had been getting worse.

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CAMPBELL STUDIO



One of the Armenian Relief Committee's Photographs of Rescued Little Ones.

She must not use the foot for the present. The most skilled experts in New York are treating the hurt ankle each day.

"The pain is going now—it is not so bad as when I had to hide my sufferings," Aurora said to Mrs. Harriman, "but my heart would have hurt forever if I had not done my duty to Armenia and finished my picture on time."

At the initial private exhibitions of the Relief Committee's picture in the Plaza ballroom Aurora met many of the personal friends of Mrs. Harriman and Mrs. Vanderbilt, who are managing the special exhibitions.

Many who meet and learn to know Miss Mardiganian ask those who know her best, "What are her memories—her memories of the past she left behind in her Ravished Armenia?" There is no better answer to these frequent queries than an incident which occurred in the gay dining room of the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, Cal., where Miss Aurora, eating her dinner in the midst of the brilliant assemblage, was the centre of interest and frequently interrupted during her meal by fashionably gowned women and distinguished men who crowded around her table to pay their respects.

Miss Aurora seemed to be annoyed; she Great Britain Rights Reserved.

avoided answering the questions put to her; she plainly evinced a desire to be, as she expressed it, "let alone." To those who pressed her for a word or two, that they might go away and say that they had "spoken to Aurora Mardiganian, the Joan of Arc of Armenia," she refused to reply.

When the meal was finished and she had retired to her apartments with her guardian, Miss Aurora was gently chided; she was told that in America young girls must always be most gracious in the presence of their elders; that in America little girls were not allowed the privilege of "moods" and moroseness in public. "But it is not a mood or a naughty temper," she pleaded. "I do not like to talk when I am eating. I cannot talk at such a



UNDERWOOD

Mrs. Oliver Harriman and Aurora Mardiganian. The Girl's Crushed Foot Is Wrapped in Surgical Bandages. (Above) Aurora Mardiganian in Native Armenian Costume.

time, because each time I take a mouthful of food I like always to wait a minute before I swallow it, and say in my mind a prayer to God that he will send another mouthful of food, just like mine, to my poor starving Armenia."